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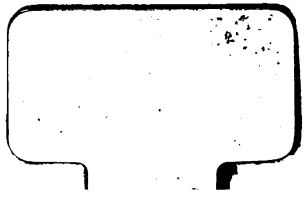

79.

皇帝大婚禮圖

THE MARRIAGE

OF THE

EMPEROR OF CHINA.

AT PEKING ON THE 16TH OCTOBER 1872.

FROM THE CHINESE

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THE

Marriage of the Emperor

OF

CHINA,

AT PEKING ON THE 16TH OCTOBER, 1872.

FROM THE CHINESE.

BY

L. M. F.

SHANGHAI:

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1872.

DEDICATION.

In accordance with the wishes of the Emperor, that His Marriage should be made known to "all under Heaven" (天下), the following account of it, translated from the Official Programme of the Ceremonies to be observed for the solemnization of the great event, is dedicated, as a step towards the accomplishment of the Imperial desire, to the Foreign Ladies of China and Japan, by

THE TRANSLATOR.

Shanghai, November, 1872.

大婚禮節

THE

MARRIAGE OF THE EMPEROR OF CHINA,

AT PEKING ON THE 16TH OCTOBER, 1872.

ORDER OF CEREMONIES FOR THE FIRST DAY— THE DAY BEFORE THE MARRIAGE.

THE 禮部 *(Li Poo)*, Board of Rites, in accordance with the ancient custom of the Empire, has issued a Programme of the ceremonies to be observed in celebrating the EMPEROR'S marriage. A copy has found its way to Shanghai, and it is curious to observe while reading it, that though never was an Imperial marriage more private, yet was never there a marriage, the minute details of which were more fully given to the public.

This document, though many of its details are tiresome enough, has yet, in its general tenor, a profound interest both for the politician and the student of human character; it is rather a "Book of directions" than a Pro-

gramme, as it comes from that august body who decide the forms and ceremonials suitable to be observed by and towards Emperors and Empresses, not only in their public acts, but in all their intercourse with each other.

Proceeding to the examination of it, we find that the first direction regards the arrangement of the bridal presents, and of the procession which is to escort them to the residence of the EMPRESS-ELECT. This is done the day before the marriage. In the category of the Imperial gifts are the Crown of Pearls, Phœnix Robes, and jewels in which the Bride is to array herself the next day. Also a Golden Tablet on which is inscribed *The Permission* of the EMPRESS-DOWAGER and EMPRESS-MOTHER, "allowing the EMPEROR to marry AH-LU-TÊ, 阿魯特, the accomplished and virtuous daughter of 崇綺, 公, CHUNG-CHE, Duke, and a distinguished member of the Han-lin." This tablet of gold, a Sceptre and Seal, the insignia of Imperial rule, hold a prominent place in all the succeeding ceremonies. The first of these ceremonies begins in one of the courts of the

EMPEROR'S palace, and consists in arranging the gifts and forming the procession; and such a list of decorations, emblazoned shields and banners,—such an array of elephants, horses, chariots, horsemen, guards, charioteers, musicians, incense-bearers, etc., etc., beggars all description, and would be tedious to give in the minute detail which characterises the original document. The procession first surrounds the court in a circle with an open space at the north. In the centre of the circle are placed three tables richly decorated, on one of which is laid the Golden Tablet, enclosed in a triple casket of gold and jewels, mounted on a costly frame. On the table at the right is placed the Imperial Seal; in the centre, the jewelled Sceptre. When all this is properly arranged, an officer of the Astronomical Board proclaims in a loud voice, "The hour of joy dawns!" At that auspicious moment the EMPEROR in His Dragon Robes, with a train of body guards, enters the court from a south gate of the palace, which is close upon the open space in the circle, and is welcomed by the ringing of bells, and with drums and gongs and trumpets and cymbals and clouds of incense.

His Majesty is then escorted by the Grand Master of Ceremonies to the three tables on which are the Tablet, Sceptre and Seal that are soon to be presented to the EMPRESS-ELECT in His name. After looking at them a moment, and assuring Himself that they are properly arranged for presentation, He is escorted to a Dragon Pavilion, and seated: then all the officers of the Court and of the six Boards draw near the tables, kneel and prostrate themselves three times, and repeat the kneeling three times, making three prostrations each time,—their faces towards the south. The music then ceases, and a herald proclaims that all are to stand with their "faces to the north!" Another herald announces, "An Edict from the Most Illustrious and Merciful EMPRESS, and the Most Illustrious and Blessed EMPRESS is to be read." All kneel, except the EMPEROR who remains sitting in the Pavilion. And again a herald proclaims, "Let the will of their Majesties the two EMPRESSES be known!" Then a duly appointed officer, standing with his face to the west, reads in a loud voice *The Permission*, (which has already been engraved on the Golden Tablet enclosed in a triple

casket of gold and jewels, mounted on a costly frame, and placed upon a table before the kneeling multitude), and adds, "The appointed officers here present to AH-LU-TÊ, in the name of Him who sits upon the Dragon Throne, the Sceptre with which she is to rule, and the Golden Tablet and Seal by which she is invested with Imperial authority." A gong is then struck three times, and the Band plays *The Emperor Triumphs*. His Majesty then rises, and is escorted to His apartments. The music ceases. The procession begins to re-form. A high officer approaches the middle table, reverently takes the Sceptre with both hands, presents it to another officer who receives it with both hands, walks backward with his face to the west and stands; while the same officer next takes the Golden Casket, then the Seal, and presents them in the same manner to two other officers, who also walk backwards a few steps and stop, until the officer carrying the Sceptre moves on; then they follow, and deliver their precious charges to the Grand Master of Ceremonies, who places them in the Dragon Car, which is borne by High Mandarins preceded by pennants, flags,

a great variety of decorations, the Imperial yellow dragon-umbrella, etc. Then follow the decorated cars on which are placed the Phœnix Robes, the Crown of Pearls and other bridal gifts; then the incense-bearers with tripods and other incense burners; and the whole procession moves on to the residence of CHUNG CHE, Duke, the father of the Bride, where preparations have already been made for the reception, in the court of the palace, and three tables have been arranged according to the prescribed forms, upon which are to be placed the Casket, Sceptre and Seal. Arrived at the outer gate of the DUKE'S palace, they are received by the DUKE, his father, his sons and other male relations of the family, and escorted through several courts to an inner one, where are the tables inlaid with precious stones, upon which the Casket, Sceptre and Seal are to be laid. At the door of this court they fall back, kneeling, as the Dragon Car, containing the Golden Casket, Sceptre and Seal, passes on, also the car on which are laid the Phœnix Robes, the Crown of Pearls, jewels and other ornaments. The Casket, Sceptre and Seal are then placed as before on the three tables, the Sceptre

being always in the centre. A company of eunuchs then draw near the car containing the Imperial trousseau, and reverently carry it to the door of another reception room, where it is received by a number of ladies in waiting, who, kneeling, present it to the EMPRESS-ELECT. In the meantime her father, grand-father, brothers and other male members of the family, (who have been kneeling all this time) are commanded to rise. The father is led before the middle table with his face to the north. A Master of Ceremonies then cries, "Listen to the will of Heaven!" The father kneels, bows his head three times, repeating twice the kneeling and bowing—continuing the last kneeling until the herald has read to him *The Permission*. He is then allowed to retire. The door, through which the Phœnix Robes and Crown disappeared, again opens. The EMPRESS-ELECT, arrayed in the Phœnix Robes, the Strings of Pearls depending from the jewelled Crown veiling her face, and led by her maidens, appears; an officer from the inner palace of the EMPEROR approaches the table where lies the Sceptre; takes it and turns to the door at which Her Majesty is entering and, holding it

high with both hands, reverently advances to meet her. She kneels, passes the Sceptre, and proceeds to the table with her face to the south. The officer holding the Sceptre stops, his face to the north; the ladies in waiting all kneel as they pass, and are followed by the mother of the young EMPRESS, and the lady members of the family, who all kneel as they pass the Imperial Sceptre, and all kneel again as the officer passes to lay the Sceptre in its former place on the centre table from which he had taken it.

Four noble ladies, who have been appointed to assist the EMPRESS-ELECT in this part of her duties, now advance and range themselves by her side. Two more are appointed, the one to read again *The Permission*, and the other to read a complimentary address written by the Hanlin (for the two EMPRESSES), informing the young girl why She, from all the young ladies under Heaven, was chosen to be the Bride of an Emperor, etc. When all is ready for the reading, the Mistress of Ceremonies cries, "Kneel to the Will of Heaven:" —all kneel, while the first lady reads *The Permission* and the second *The Congratulatory*

Address. When the reading is finished, all still remaining on their knees, the lady at the left rises, takes the Golden Casket from the table, kneels and presents it to the lady kneeling at the right of the EMPRESS-ELECT, who rises and presents it to Her Majesty kneeling, who receives it and puts it again on the table. The same ceremony is observed with the Seal; but as this is the day before the marriage, no lady can yet put her hands upon the Sceptre, and the officer from the EMPEROR who bore it to the Ducal palace now approaches the table on which it lies, takes it with both hands, holds it aloft; the Mistress of Ceremonies cries, "Kneel and worship;" the EMPRESS-ELECT kneels, bows three times—repeats twice the kneeling, bowing thrice each time. As she rises, the DUCHESS, her mother, and all the ladies present perform the same "kotow." The officer bearing the Sceptre then moves towards the outer door of the Reception Room, the young Fiancée makes a few steps forward, as if to say a fond "au revoir" to that jewelled Sceptre which will be hers to-morrow, and then falls back. Her mother and the ladies of the family draw near, pass her and escort the Sceptre to the

door; the officer passes out, and is met by Duke CHUNG and the male members of his family, who escort him to the court where the main procession has awaited his return. The procession again forms and, preceded by the Sceptre, the Imperial umbrella, etc., etc., marches back to the palace of the EMPEROR. In the meantime two eunuchs approach the tables where still lie the Golden Casket and Seal; carry them to the door of the apartments of the Imperial Fiancée, where they are received by her ladies in waiting. The palace gates are shut, and a herald proclaims, "The Rites are accomplished as commanded," and this is repeated by runners stationed along the way, until it is heard and re-echoed through the courts of the palace of the EMPEROR.

Thus ends the order of Ceremonies for the day before "The Union of the Dragon with the Phœnix."

THE SECOND DAY—THE WEDDING.

THE first event of this day is the visit of the EMPEROR to the two EMPRESSES which, though put down in the Programme seems more like the visit of a dutiful son to his parents than a public ceremonial. He is attired in His Dragon Robes—yet attended only by His ordinary staff and body guards, with four officers of the Board of Rites, who conduct Him to the door of the Throne Room called the "Place of tranquil happiness," where He stands, as a subject would stand, His face to the west. (The Throne Room of "tranquil happiness" is a superb apartment with two thrones in the centre where the two EMPRESSES hold their Court). The approach of their Majesties is announced by strains of music called *Peaceful, Harmonious and Tranquil;* they enter, followed by a long train of noble ladies, and seat themselves upon the thrones, their faces to the south. The EMPEROR, who is still standing in the door, is then led into the room by the Master of Cere-

monies and to the foot of the thrones, His face to the north. The band again strikes up and plays *The Conqueror Comes:* He is commanded to kneel. The EMPEROR kneels before the thrones of the two sovereign ladies. He is then ordered to worship: He bows three times, His sceptred brow touching the golden embroidery of the foot of the thrones. He is commanded to rise. The EMPEROR rises. He is again ordered to kneel, and the ceremony of kneeling and bowing is repeated three times, and is called thrice kneeling and nine times worshipping: when this is completed the music ceases for a moment. Another strain begins, and the EMPEROR, attended by His suite, retires from the Room as a herald proclaims, "It is done, the rites are accomplished" (*i. e.*, the EMPEROR has paid a visit of respect, or, as it is generally said, *has worshipped* his mother the EMPRESS, and the EMPRESS-DOWAGER according to the prescribed forms.) The Imperial ladies with their train then retire, and are seen no more during the day, but the EMPEROR is escorted to another Throne Room, called "Peace and Happiness," where are already assembled the Princes of the Blood, the nobility, the high

officers of the Court, with the Presidents and principal officers of the six Boards. He is conducted to the throne and seated—Princes, nobles and high officers all kneeling as He passes. Then, according to his rank, each approaches the foot of the throne (his face to the north, as the EMPEROR now sits with his face to the south) and, at the command of the Grand Marshal, kneels, bows three times; rises, kneels again, bows three times; rises, kneels, and bows three times more, touching with his forehead the foot of the Dragon Throne. When this ceremony has been performed by all the assembled Princes, nobles and officers, a herald proclaims, "The Will of the Most Illustrious EMPRESS the Merciful Consoler, and of the Most Illustrious EMPRESS the Merciful and Blessed, shall be made known and read!" All present except the EMPEROR, again kneel, and a member of the Board of Rites reads in a loud voice a copy of *The Permission* or consent of the two EMPRESSES to the marriage of the EMPEROR, which was already engraven on a tablet of gold and read three times the day before,—first in the presence of the EMPEROR as he sat in the Dragon Pavilion, and for the "edification" of

that part of the Court and other high officers who were sent with the bridal trousseau to the palace of Duke CHUNG; it was read again for him and the male members of his family, and a third time to the EMPRESS-ELECT and her ladies in waiting. This fourth reading for the benefit of the Princes, nobles etc., being finished, the band plays *The Accomplishment of Joyful Bliss.* The EMPEROR descends from the throne and goes out, followed by His staff and the Court officers whose duty it is to attend Him to his private apartments.

And thus ends the Third Ceremonial of the Imperial marriage.

The fourth grand ceremony is to go to the palace of Duke CHUNG, and bring his daughter to the palace of the EMPEROR, where the marriage is to be celebrated. A procession is formed in the great central court of the EMPEROR'S palace, essentially the same as the day before, with the addition of the Phœnix Chair, and an escort of Princes mounted on horseback. When all is arranged, the long cavalcade files out of the court through gates and other courts and avenues, over moat and drawbridge, until marshalled in the great highway, "en route" for

the ducal palace, the Bands playing *We come for the Phœnix.* At the outer gate of the ducal palace they are received by the DUKE, his father, his sons, other relatives and suite. Here, only the Princes and officers who bear again the Golden Casket, the Sceptre and Signet are allowed to enter, followed by the sixteen chair-bearers, each attended by two eunuchs, who carry the Imperial Phœnix Chair. The Bands of music stop outside, as does the whole remaining cavalcade, waiting to re-escort the Phœnix Chair (in which will sit the closely veiled Bride) to the Palace of the EMPEROR. The princely cortége, admitted inside of the palace gates, is then conducted through gates and courts to the Grand Reception Room, in the centre of which is a magnificent table covered with cloth of gold, upon which the PRINCE who bears the Sceptre reverently places it, standing on the east side of the table, his face to the west. A herald proclaims, "Hear the Will of the Most Illustrious, Merciful and Blessed EMPRESSES." The DUKE kneels at a little distance from the table, on the north side, his face to the south, where lies the Sceptre, symbol of Imperial power; the PRINCE, who is the Grand Marshal of the day, reads

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canopy or umbrella, with a multitude of small
canopies, and other decorations in the form
flowering trees bearing golden fruit and jewell
flowers; then come the lanterns, torch-bearer
incense-bearers with the banners, followed
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from that by which they left. When the caval
cade arrives at the "Golden Bridge," which n
horseman can pass, there is a general halt

again *The Permission*, which the DUKE, kneeling, heard read the day before, adding that "The Will of His Majesty the EMPEROR is now to receive his daughter AH-LU-TÊ, Empress of the Dragon Throne." The Phœnix Chair is then borne to the centre of the Room, the father bows three times three, in acquiescence to the will of Heaven, and retires with his suite. The herald then cries, "The auspicious hour dawns!" All present kneel on either side of the Chair, a door opens into the Grand Audience Room, and the young Fiancée, attired in the Imperial Phœnix Robes (sent yesterday by the two EMPRESSES), preceded by her mother and sisters, and conducted by other noble ladies in robes of State, enters, and is led to the Chair, all kneeling with bowed heads as she passes. When she is seated, the curtains and screens are closely drawn, the mother, followed by all the noble ladies and their attendants, withdraws. The Phœnix Chair is taken up by the bearers, who move on preceded by the PRINCE who bears the Sceptre. At the door they are again met by the DUKE and the male members and relatives of the family, who escort the Imperial cortége to

the outer court and to the gate, where waits the principal part of the cavalcade. The procession then forms again, and is led by officers carrying pennants, flags, enormous fans, the yellow satin gold-embroidered Dragon canopy or umbrella, with a multitude of smaller canopies, and other decorations in the form of flowering trees bearing golden fruit and jewelled flowers; then come the lanterns, torch-bearers, incense-bearers with the banners, followed by the Bands and their instruments in cases or covered (this being in compliment, or rather from respect to the young Fiancée, who is supposed to be sorrowing at the leaving of her father's house, and separating from her mother and family for the first time.) Then follow the Princes mounted on richly caparisoned chargers, next the Phœnix Chair, then the Imperial life guards, after them companies of cavalry officers, then the foot soldiers and attendants; and in this order all move on to the palace of the EMPEROR by a different route, and enter the outer precincts of the palace by a different gate from that by which they left. When the cavalcade arrives at the "Golden Bridge," which no horseman can pass, there is a general halt.

The PRINCE (an uncle of the EMPEROR) who bears the Sceptre dismounts, and all the horsemen do the same. A herald proclaims, "The Phœnix Chair has arrived!" and is answered from the courts within by a tremendous burst of music, the ringing of bells, the beating of drums and gongs, the striking of cymbals, blowing of trumpets, etc. Here the horsemen and all the ornamental and decorative part of the procession stop. The Phœnix Chair, its bearers and attendants pass on through numberless, though not nameless gates and courts, being escorted from one to the other with a minuteness of ceremony that only a "Celestial" could perform or appreciate; but at last the Chair preceded by the Dragon Car, in which the Sceptre was placed at the Golden Bridge, is put down in the great central court that leads into the grand central Throne Room. A herald proclaims, "The orders of His Sacred Majesty the EMPEROR are fulfilled!" then all, except those of whom special duty is required, retire. The Princes carrying the Tablet, Sceptre and Seal, enter the great central Throne Room, and place them upon tables of malachite and jade, and then retire. The Bride's Chair is

then brought into the grand Reception Room. The eunuchs who attend it unfold silken screens on both sides, the Chair-bearers fall back, kneel and cover their faces; a number of noble ladies, who have been waiting, now approach the Chair and assist the Bride to leave it, and lead her to a richly canopied seat prepared for her in the centre of the Room, where they seat her, she looking south upon the tables where lie the insignia of Imperial power.

A herald cries with a loud voice, "The auspicious moment dawns, all is prepared for the joyful 合 卺 *Hô Ching!*" Then a door slowly opens, and the EMPEROR, in full State Uniform and Dragon Robes, attended only by His body guard of eunuchs, enters the Throne Room, approaches the central seat, where He for the first time sees the "veiled object" of all this pageant pomp and ceremony; He performs the prescribed rites of meeting and sitting at the same table. [The detail of these ceremonies is not given by the Board of Rites.]

Another document from the Lord High Chamberlain of the realm, gives some account of how the tables are arranged, and of the decorations, and the two Dragon flagons of

gold which hold the wine, from which the Bridal Pair are first served, and the two jewelled wine cups which are filled from them, and presented at the same time by the attendants—the one to the Bride the other to the Bride-groom; the cups are then exchanged, and the Bride receives that just offered to her Lord, and He the one just presented to her. This ceremony, to which belong other minute details, is called *Hô Ching*, and is considered the real ratification of the marriage vows. It is accompanied by bands of music outside, and clouds of incense within, as in offering sacrifices to Heaven.

Another document from the High Chamberlain of the Imperial household, gives some directions for the placing of the bridal gifts from the two EMPRESSES and the EMPEROR, which are arranged in an adjoining room. Bridal presents from friends, Princes of the Blood, tributary Princes, high officers of the Court and realm, are not made until the third day after the marriage. In this category, therefore, only the gifts from the two EMPRESSES and the EMPEROR are included; and they can only be glanced at, as a full enumeration of them would require pages. As among the betrothal gifts

from the EMPEROR were twenty white riding horses, and forty carriage horses, one is not surprised to see among the bridal gifts a number of gold-embroidered ladies' saddles; also others covered with fine fur saddle-cloths, gold and silver bits and stirrups of gold, with silken bridles, and every variety of costly housing with which the steed of an Empress could be caparisoned in time of peace or war! Among the betrothal gifts also were 1,000 pieces of satin; 20 suits of armour; 200 ounces of pure gold in bullion; 10,000 ounces of silver in bars; a large tea canister of pure gold; two of silver; two silver wash-basins, etc., etc.! Among the most "curious" of the bridal gifts are large and long pieces of green and white jade of priceless value, supposed to possess some mystic power—like the magic wand of fairy tales—of conferring joy and happiness on their owner; these are called 如意 *Shu-I*—"Heart's delight;"—incense-burners, cushions for kneeling of satin and gold embroidery; jewelled vases and vases of gold enamel; jade and gold wine cups; tankards, flagons and flasks of gold, silver and jade on tables of jade and green mala-

chite are also met with in profusion. The Phœnix and Dragon Couch, upon each corner of which is laid the *Shu-I*, and at the side the Phœnix and Dragon Robes of "United peace"—*i. e.* night-robes; Phœnix lamps and lanterns; Dragon lamps; Incense censers and tripods of gold and malachite; charms; screens; curtains of heavy brocade; tables decorated with golden fruits and flowers upon which are hung costly jewels; bracelets, rings and ear-rings of priceless value; necklaces of gold and pearls, hair pins of gold and of green and white jade, with every other possible variety of *parure*, of head-dress and ornament for the hair.

In this same apartment are also placed the tables, arranged with the proper sacrifices for worshipping Heaven and Earth; the god of Happiness; the god of the Kitchen. Over these tables are suspended immense censers by chains of massive gold, in which incense is burned, when the EMPEROR and EMPRESS worship there—which worship, according to the prescribed forms, is a part of the marriage rites, and completes the cumbrous ceremonies of the marriage day.

* * *

THE THIRD DAY AFTER THE MARRIAGE.

ON this day, the EMPRESS makes an early visit of ceremony to the EMPRESS-DOWAGER and the EMPRESS-MOTHER, which is accompanied by ceremonies innumerable, that end at last by the EMPRESS kneeling three times, bowing nine times to their Majesties, and the presentation of a jewelled cup of wine, on the part of the EMPRESSES, by an attendant, to the EMPRESS, who receives it on her part by her attendants. Carved ivory and gold chop-sticks, with some articles of food, are then presented and received in the same manner. This is a ceremony somewhat like the *Hô Ching* of the day before with the EMPEROR, and means for the lady thus honoured: "You are received into the family, and are henceforth a part of it, and one with it." No second wife is ever considered worthy of participating in this sacred rite. When this is finished the EMPRESS rises; again kneels, bowing three times; rises, kneels bowing three times; rises, kneels

to the great Throne—closely follow the EMPEROR, Princes, nobles, and the long train of Court officers. The EMPEROR ascends the steps, and stops on the east side of the doorway with His face to the west. Not a Prince of the Blood is allowed to ascend the steps, or even to stand in front of the door where lies the yellow cushion of the EMPEROR. They arrange themselves on either side of the steps face to face, leaving the width of the steps between them as they range thus down the court, and into the street where a good many of the cavalcade still remain. Thus they all stand waiting, while the two EMPRESSES are escorted to their thrones, which are placed in the centre of the Room opposite the great door where still stands the EMPEROR. Music is heard within the palace, and the two sovereigns in robes of State, accompanied by a long train of noble ladies, enter and are seated upon the two thrones, their faces to the south; the music ceases. The Master of Ceremonies then leads the EMPEROR from the east side of the doorway, where He has been standing, to the middle of the doorway, and leaves Him still standing, but with His face towards the thrones where sit His mother

and the EMPRESS-DOWAGER. The Princes, nobles, rulers, etc., who are waiting below are then ordered "to turn to the thrones" which, from their position, is easily done, as all on the east side turn to the right, and those on the west side turn to the left; this brings their faces opposite the door and looking towards the thrones; the vacant place leading from the steps is soon filled, and all look towards the thrones. Then a herald cries in a loud voice, "Kneel!" In a moment the EMPEROR and all His train are on their knees. 三拜 *San-pai!* again cries the herald, and all bow their faces three times to the earth; and the cry is repeated from rank to rank by heralds stationed along the routes; the command is also extended to all in the street, and echoed from street to street until it reaches the palace of the EMPEROR. And for a moment the novel sight might be witnessed of the EMPEROR of the Dragon Throne—Princes, nobles and high officers, rulers and subjects—all prostrating themselves before two women! (though it is rather to the *position* as mothers of the EMPEROR than to the *persons* that all this homage is offered). The herald then orders all to

"Rise." All rise, and are ordered to kneel and bow again—the usual three times three—which being performed, the herald for the third time orders all to "Rise from their knees." All rise and stand, and the herald cries, "The Imperial Rites of Presentation are accomplished." The EMPEROR is then led to His former place in the east side of the doorway, and left standing, His face to the west; the bands of musicians strike up within and without the palace; the host of Princes, nobles and rulers return to their places on either side of the entrance, and the Grand Master of Ceremonies cries out, "The Most Illustrious Merciful EMPRESS, with the Most Illustrious Blessed EMPRESS will now leave the Throne room." The two EMPRESSES then descend from their thrones under an escort of noble ladies in waiting; and attended by eunuchs, with music, are conducted to their own apartments. The music ceases, and a herald again cries, "The ceremonies of the Dragon Throne are fulfilled!"

The EMPEROR is escorted to a gate on the left (the left side being considered the side of honour in China), and returns to His palace

attended only by His staff and life'guards. The Princes and the remaining part of the cavalcade return to the palace by the same route by which they had left it, entering the great central gate of the palace. The EMPEROR then holds a Court in His own Audience Chamber, at which the Princes, nobles, civil and military officers of the Court and realm present themselves—are received by and take leave of His Majesty of the Dragon Throne in accordance with the forms prescribed by the Board of Rites.

On the same day the young EMPRESS presents the Princesses, noble ladies, and wives of the high officers of the Court to the EMPRESS-DOWAGER and the EMPRESS-MOTHER, the details of which presentation and reception would fill pages; but it may, perhaps, satisfy a European reader to know that all was done according to the prescribed etiquette of the Court of the Dragon Throne!

After this, the young EMPRESS holds a Court, and receives the Princesses, noble ladies and wives of the high officers and rulers, and all is ordered with the usual pomp and ceremony, music and incense of Eastern Courts.

* * *

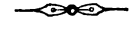
THE SIXTH DAY AFTER THE MARRIAGE.

ON the sixth day the EMPEROR holds a Court at which Duke CHUNG, His father-in-law, the DUKE's father, his sons and all the male relatives of his family are presented—and afterwards invited to a magnificent feast with the Princes (uncles of the EMPEROR) the Princes of Mongolia and Manchuria, tributary Princes, nobles, officers of the Court, etc.—the details of which reception and feast, and of the pomp and pageantry of the ceremonies may be found written in the "Court Guide" of the Dragon Throne. One little incident may be given as an example. Duke CHUNG on his way to the Audience Chamber of the EMPEROR, passes the closed door leading to the palace of the two EMPRESSES; he stops with his suite, kneels, bows three times—and then repeats the kneeling and bowing—and passes on his way to kneel and bow again to his son-in-law the EMPEROR of China!

The two EMPRESSES also hold a Court, and receive the Duchess CHUNG, the mother-in-law of

the EMPEROR, her daughters, her sons' wives and all the lady relatives of the family. After the Audience they also sit down to a royal banquet, at which the two EMPRESSES preside. At this banquet the young EMPRESS does not appear, as the etiquette of the Dragon Court has no prescribed forms for the entertainment of an EMPRESS with the mother of an EMPRESS! According to ordinary Court etiquette two EMPRESSES may receive and entertain a third, who would take precedence of all other guests; but by all the rules of the Empire and of the principles of filial piety, a mother must always take precedence of her daughter; yet at an Imperial Banquet an Empress must be of the first consideration; therefore if her mother is present, the EMPRESS does not appear; and thus the difficulty is adjusted!

The arrangement, decorations, and ceremonies of this feast differ little from the others, and may be found written in the "Court Guide" of the Board of Rites.



EPILOGUE.

IT has been said that these are the first details ever given to the public, by the Chinese, of the marriage of an Emperor. It may be true, as this is the first marriage of an Emperor since that of KANG-HI in 1674, and the only other marriage of a sovereign after he ascended the throne. All the other Emperors of this dynasty married when only heirs-apparent to the throne. It is said to have been the aim of the Board of Rites, in arranging the ceremonies, that everything should surpass in grandeur, pomp and pageantry, even the grand preparations and magnificent ceremonies with which the Imperial marriage of KANG-HI was celebrated. To this end the young EMPEROR gave, it is said, from His private treasury, 1,000,000 taels, (equal to something over £300,000) which was mostly spent in betrothal and bridal gifts and decorations. He seems to have entered into the spirit of the preparations with great interest, particu-

larly that the details of the ceremony should be made public and known to all "under Heaven"—and all *in Heaven*, if one might judge by His sending three Princes the day before the Phœnix Robes and diadem were sent to the Bride, with attendants carrying costly offering and sacrifices—one to the Altar of Heaven to offer sacrifice and burn incense, informing Heaven that He was about "to marry 阿魯特 AH-LU-TÊ, the wise, virtuous and accomplished daughter of the family of CHUNG, Duke and member of the Hanlin." A second Prince informs Mother Earth of the same important event, offering sacrifice and incense. The third Prince went to the Imperial Ancestral Temple with his attendants and sacrifices, informing the spirits of the ancestors of the EMPEROR (according to the required rites) of the same momentous fact. Another interesting consequent of the Imperial marriage was that for a week before and a week after, all Criminal Courts and Courts of Justice were closed throughout the Empire, and all criminals and condemned persons pardoned.